

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia in Copenhagen, Denmark

December 18, 2009

President Obama. Obviously, our main concern in coming to Copenhagen was to try to move forward with an accord on the issue of climate change. But on the margins of this meeting we thought it was important to continue to build on the excellent relationship that our two Governments have developed over the last several months.

Our main focus today was the START Treaty, the new START Treaty that we have been negotiating. We've been making excellent progress. We are quite close to an agreement, and I'm confident that it will be completed in a timely fashion. And I just want to thank President Medvedev for being a very effective partner in these negotiations.

And we wish him a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

President Medvedev. For my part, as an effective partner of President Obama, I will say all the same, but using different words, as the custom that we have in our diplomatic practice.

That's true that we arrived in Copenhagen not to have this bilateral meeting, but to move forward all the whole range of climate issues, and in this respect our work is not over. But on the other hand, it would be unreasonable not to use this opportunity in order to—not to discuss what we've been doing for the recent days or the recent time in a very coordinated and persistent manner. And I would like to thank Mr. Obama and the U.S. negotiating team. I am talking about a new treaty on the reductions of strategic arms.

And our positions are very close and almost all the issues that we've been discussing for the last month are almost closed. And there are certain technical details which we can encounter, many agreements which require further work. I hope that we will be able to do it in a quite brief period of time. The outcome of our efforts will reflect good and close spirit of our relationship that we have established with the new U.S. administration.

[At this point, President Medvedev continued in English.]

And I would like to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. at the Bella Center. President Medvedev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Russia, President Medvedev.

Locations: Copenhagen, Denmark.

Names: Medvedev, Dmitry A.

Subjects: Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia, proposed expansion; Denmark : President Obama's visit; Environment : Climate change; Environment : United Nations Climate Change Conference;

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